

Dr. Jane E. Henney, Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14-71
Rockville, MD 20857

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Dear Dr. Henney,

We are writing to urge you to ban the use of antibiotics as livestock growth promoters, due to the severe threat this poses to public health. This action would be an important step in protecting the effectiveness of drugs used to treat human diseases.

As you certainly must know, the use of antibiotics as a feed additive to fatten livestock is making disease-causing bacteria more resistant to the drugs humans rely upon to treat tuberculosis, pneumonia, staph infections, and other life-threatening infectious diseases. Physicians are finding an increasing number of cases in which antibiotics are no longer curing diseases. For example, as many as 40% of strains of streptococcus pneumoniae, a bacterium that causes pneumonia and bloodstream and ear infections, are now resistant to penicillin and other commonly used antibiotics. Patients with antibiotic-resistant infections have died.

In 1997, the World Health Organization called for a ban on using antibiotics to fatten livestock. Since then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association and other public health organizations have taken similar positions. The European Union heeded these concerns last year when it banned adding human-use antibiotics to animal feed.

Please do not underestimate the views of these medical professionals. We have too much to lose. Please do everything within your power to ban the use of medically useful antibiotics as livestock growth promoters. Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to hearing your position on this important issue.

Sincerely,



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